

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SALUTE TO CALIFORNIA'S RIO AMERICANO HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 1996

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with the U.S. Department of Education in saluting Sacramento, California's Rio Americano High School for recently winning recognition as one of our Nation's blue ribbon schools.

I am proud to have such a model institution within my district. For many years, the school's administration, faculty, students, and parents have devoted their collaborative efforts toward the construction of a school and student body which exceeds local, State, and national goals for educating all of its students.

Rio Americano's recognition is well-deserved and its students' phenomenal success underscores the positive results other schools can enjoy by adopting the principles of GOALS 2000: Educate America.

As testament to its success, the school boasts a dropout rate of 0.3 percent and students graduating from Rio Americano are extraordinarily competitive; 94 percent were accepted at the college or university of their choice in 1994.

The proximity to the State capitol provides Rio Americano with a highly motivated, informed community with expectations of excellence in education and the willingness to become partners in the realization of that goal.

Students take an active role in the setting of goals and priorities for the school, as well as discussions which address the implementation of these goals and priorities. This approach fosters the development of sound character, democratic values, ethical judgment, good behavior, and the ability to work in a self-disciplined and purposeful manner. The results are evident in the students' successful roles in a highly active student government, the operation of the school's radio and television stations, the production of the newspaper and yearbook, the planning of rallies and assemblies, the operation of clubs, and the chairing of meetings of student representative groups.

Parents of Rio Americano students logged 8,837 volunteer hours at the school last year alone. They are actively involved in the development of programs, representing the interests of the community, and raising resources which enable the students to participate in enriching experiences within and beyond the classroom. As part of their extensive involvement, parents are responsible for the development and management of several model programs for facilitating the exit of seniors from the schools.

Finally, the school is fortunate to enjoy the outstanding leadership of its principal, Dr. Ronald Uzelac and his dedicated faculty of

educators. Together, they have structured the school to take advantage of the strengths of our community, creating and facilitating forums for staff, students, and parents to work together to examine, debate, and develop programs which draw upon these strengths.

One such program gaining acclaim is Academia Civitas, a political academy which takes advantage of our location in the State capital by establishing a partnership with local political and educational communities. Students follow a specialized curriculum developed by study teams which prepare them to be politically aware citizens able to compete in and contribute to a global society. The academy requires community service, parent involvement, and an internship with one of the many volunteer agencies in our political community.

The State of California has recognized Rio Americano's excellence by honoring the school three times with the Distinguished School Award in 1988 and 1994 and the Sustained Achievement Award in 1990.

Again, I would like to take this opportunity to salute the tremendous efforts on the part of Rio Americano High School's administration, faculty, students, and parents. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this model public school and in wishing Rio Americano many years of continued success.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. BARBARA B. KENNELLY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 1996

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, each February, those of us who serve in Congress have the occasion to rediscover a rich history that has been carefully chronicled by educator and historian, Dr. Carter Woodson, the father of Black History Month. This year, our focus is on African-American women, their past, present, and future.

As a group, these women have made remarkable contributions to this Nation. As individuals, they have enriched lives. Over and over, their stories speak to the strength behind the struggle; to the courage that leads to triumph; to the vision that leads to victory.

This year, our Nation mourned the death of Barbara Jordan, a true champion of the Constitution. She made history from the moment she was elected to Congress as the first African-American from the South to serve since Reconstruction. With her passionate commitment to law, her burning sense of justice, and above all, a voice that spoke truth, she exemplified the spirit of African-American women.

But such heroines are found in all walks of life, and not just in Washington, but in towns and cities across the country. I am proud that Connecticut's First Congressional District is home to so many remarkable African-American women.

Some made their mark with community activism, like the late Isabelle Blake, founder of Connecticut's African-American Day Parade; Ella Cromwell; and Blanche Jackson. Some are outstanding educators, like Dr. Edythe Gaines of the Connecticut State Board of Education and Eileen Baccus, president of Northwestern Community Technical College.

Some have served in the political world, like Alred Dyce of the Bloomfield Town Council; Carrie Saxon Perry, who broke barriers as the first African-American woman elected to lead a northeastern city; Annette Carter and Marie Lopez Kirkley-Bey, who serve in the State legislature today; and Veronica Airey-Wilson, who serves on the Hartford City Council. There are government professionals, like the city manager of Hartford, Sandra Kee Borges, and the city treasurer, Denise Nappier, and those who sit on the bench, like State Superior Court Judge Curtissa Cofield.

Some inspire us with creativity, like Dollie McLean, founder and executive director of the artist collective. Others take the lead in business, like Kyle Ballou of Fleet Bank. Some we depend on for our news, like Gayle King, WFSB-TV 3 news anchor. And some have sent our spirits soaring—like Nakisha Sales of the 1994-95 NCAA Champion UCONN women's basketball team.

It has been said that history is not what happened, but what is remembered. In this month, we seek to ensure that this precious history and these unique accomplishments are preserved forever.

THE BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL AWARD

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 1996

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to rise today to commend Wilbur Wright Middle School, and its principal, Mr. Donald Guske, and Munster High School, and its principal, Dr. Kevin McCaffrey, for having been awarded the Blue Ribbon School Award. Both schools are located in Munster, IN.

Blue ribbon schools have been judged to be particularly constructive in meeting local, State, and national goals. These schools also display the qualities of excellence that are necessary to prepare our young people for the challenges of the next century. According to the U.S. Department of Education, which issues this award, blue ribbon school status is awarded to schools that have: strong leadership; a clear vision and sense of mission that is shared by all connected with the school; high quality teaching; challenging up-to-date curricula; policies and practices that ensure a safe environment conducive to learning; a solid commitment to parental involvement; and evidence that the school helps all students achieve a quality education.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

February 13, 1996

State education departments, the Department of Defense Dependent Schools, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Council for American Private Education, review schools in depth to determine which schools meet the high standards of the award. Following the screening process, the nominations are forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education. At this point, a panel of 100 outstanding educators and other professionals review the nominations, select the schools for site visits, and make recommendations to the Secretary of Education. These schools will be honored at a national ceremony in Washington, DC, this spring.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Wilbur Wright Middle School and Munster High School for a job well done. The teachers and administrators of these two schools make Indiana's First Congressional District a better place in which to live and work. There is no greater success than to successfully educate our children.

H.R. 2963, THE KEEP THE
GOVERNMENT OPEN ACT OF 1996

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 1996

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the recent shutdown of the Federal Government wasted 1 billion taxpayer dollars. In January Congress passed and the President signed a continuing resolution that paid 285,000 Federal employees who were not able to work between December 16 and January 5 because of the 3-week lapse in appropriations for part of the Federal Government. This shutdown also imposed a serious financial hardship on many of the 476,000 Federal workers who were not paid during this period even though they were working.

The shutdown of the Federal Government hurt many private firms, both those that normally sell to Federal employees and those that have Federal contracts. They were unable to recoup the business lost during the shutdown.

Last week I introduced a bipartisan bill to prevent such harmful consequences if there should be another lapse in appropriations in the future. H.R. 2963, the Keep the Government Open Act of 1996, amends that Anti-Deficiency Act to permit Federal employees to continue to work and to be paid during a lapse in appropriations, if the President determines that a sufficient appropriation is likely to be made before the end of the fiscal year.

The other original cosponsors of this bill are Mr. DAVIS, Mr. HOYER, Mr. MORAN, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. WYNN.

I urge my colleagues to support this insurance against another failure to enact appropriations bills or continuing resolutions for the entire Government.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE MONEY PLANE

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 1996

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, a weekly magazine recently published a lengthy article raising serious questions about the business activities conducted by Republic National Bank of New York with Russian banks. Republic is a large, well-respected institution serving the New York community and employing thousands of its residents. In the interest of fairness, so that the other side of the story can be heard, I would like to submit for the RECORD the attached materials. Included among them are several letters from law enforcement agencies and bank regulatory bodies. These letters testify to the bank's record of compliance with the law and cooperation with law enforcement officials and bank regulators.

COMPTROLLER OF THE CURRENCY,
ADMINISTRATOR OF NATIONAL BANKS,
Washington, DC, January 17, 1996.

WALTER H. WEINER,

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Republic
National Bank of New York, New York, NY.

DEAR MR. WEINER: Thank you for your letter drawing my attention to the article entitled "The Money Plane" in the January 22, 1996 issue of New York magazine. The article concerns sales of U.S. dollars to Russian banks by Republic Bank and includes several statements attributed to an unnamed OCC official.

We doubt that those statements were in fact made by an OCC official. However, if they were made, please be assured that the statements were unauthorized and do not represent the views of this office. More specifically, these statements do not reflect the OCC's position concerning Republic Bank's bank note dealings with Russian banks.

As you are aware, the OCC supervises and regulates all national banks, including those that have substantial bank note dealings with Russian banks. As part of our oversight, we monitor the bank note activities of those banks, including Republic. We are satisfied that Republic's bank note activities are conducted in a manner consistent with the applicable laws we administer.

Sincerely,

EUGENE A. LUDWIG,
Comptroller of the Currency.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL
RESPONSIBILITY,

Washington, DC, February 1, 1996.

WALTER H. WEINER,

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Republic
National Bank of New York, New York, NY.

DEAR MR. WEINER: The Attorney General received your letter dated January 15, 1996, calling attention to an article entitled "The Money Plane" in the January 22, 1996 issue of New York magazine. She also received a letter from Republic National Bank Deputy General Counsel, Anne T. Vitale, concerning that same article. The Attorney General asked this Office to investigate the issues raised in the two letters and respond to you.

"The Money Plane" discusses sales of U.S. dollars by Republic National Bank to various banks in Russia. The article contains a statement attributed to an Assistant United

States Attorney (AUSA) about certain accounts at Republic National Bank.

I wish to assure you that the statements attributed to the AUSA do not represent the views of the Department of Justice. More specifically, the attributed statements do not reflect any position of the Department of Justice on Republic National Bank's bank-note transactions with Russian banks.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL E. SHAHEEN, Jr.,
Counsel.

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY,
COUNTY OF NEW YORK,
January 16, 1996.

THE EDITOR,
New York Magazine,
New York, NY.

TO THE EDITOR: I read the article entitled "The Money Plane" in the January 22, 1996 issue of New York magazine. It does raise a reasonable question about our Government's policy to permit and facilitate the sale of U.S. dollars by American and foreign banks to Russian banks. I was surprised, however, by the suggestion that it is improper for Republic National Bank to engage in this practice as well as the article's utter failure to mention that other reputable and well-known banks also engage in similar transactions.

The fact is that the U.S. Treasury, the Federal Reserve System and the State Department approve and facilitate the sale of dollars by American banks to Russian banks. Indeed, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York sells dollars with the knowledge that they are going to be resold to Russian banks. Additionally, the banks who purchase and resell the dollars file reports on each transaction with the Federal Reserve System, the United States Treasury Department, U.S. Customs and the Controller of the Currency. These are not covert transactions.

Finally, under current law, banks which buy dollars in New York and resell them to Russian banks are not required to and, indeed are unable to know, the identity of the Russian banks' customers. Republic, in fact, sells only to banks licensed by the Russian Central Bank. Unless a bank has specific information of criminal control of a Russian bank, a U.S. bank may sell banknotes to Russian banks.

My office has aggressively investigated money laundering cases for many years and does so on a regular and continuous basis. As a routine matter, we have looked at Republic's sale of dollars to Russian banks and found no evidence of misconduct or wrongdoing by Republic.

Sincerely,

ROBERT M. MORGENTHAU.

STATE OF NEW YORK,
BANKING DEPARTMENT,
New York, NY, February 1, 1996.

Mr. WALTER H. WEINER,

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Republic
National Bank of New York, New York, NY.

DEAR MR. WEINER: This letter responds to your recent letter to me enclosing a copy of the "The Money Plane" article in the January 22, 1996 issue of New York Magazine, together with copies of the January 16, 1996 letter to you from the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the January 17, 1996 letter to New York Magazine from Robert M. Morgenthau, the District Attorney for New York County and the January 24, 1996 letter to Republic National Bank of New York ("Republic") Senior Vice President Vitale from FINCEN Director Morris. Each of these letters relates to that article.

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New York Magazine's article concerns, among other things, sales of U.S. dollars to Russian banks by Republic. It includes some purported quotations and statements of unnamed sources said to be former employees of this Department who then had law enforcement investigation responsibilities.

You can be assured that if, and to the extent that, such statements may have been made by former employees of this Department, they have not been authorized to be made by this Department, were made without our awareness and do not constitute, in any manner, statements or positions of the New York State Banking Department in respect of Republic or with regard to banknotes dealings with Russian banks by Republic and other banks.

Moreover, it is the U.S. Comptroller of the Currency, and not this Department, which has been and continues to be the primary bank regulator of Republic. Thus, in the course of our functions, we do not examine Republic, nor have we conducted an investigation directed at Republic in respect of its banknotes dealings with Russian banks.

Very truly yours,

FINANCIAL CRIMES
ENFORCEMENT NETWORK,
Vienna, VA, January 24, 1996.

ANNE T. VITALE, Esq.,
Senior Vice President and Deputy General
Counsel, Republic National Bank of New
York, New York, NY.

DEAR ANNE: Your letter to me, dated January 17, 1996, concerned an article entitled "The Money Plane" in the January 22 issue of New York Magazine. That article dealt, in part, with the sale of American currency to banks in Russia by Republic National Bank of New York ("Republic").

As you point out in your letter, the shipment of bank notes by United States banks to other banks, in Russia or anywhere else, is permitted by U.S. law and there is nothing inherently illegal about such activities. The New York article was certainly unfair in suggesting otherwise. Furthermore, we have never encountered a money laundering scheme which seeks to convert assets already in financial institutions into bank notes.

Banks such as Republic, with a history of strong compliance programs and valuable cooperation with law enforcement authorities in this country, can be expected to recognize the risks of particular transactions in their efforts to avoid becoming ensnared in wrongdoing. Republic has indeed, as your letter also points out, been supplying voluntary reports to federal law enforcement of its shipments of bank notes to Russia and other countries in an effort to assist U.S. authorities.

Our program of partnership with the financial community relies on highly experienced officials such as you and banks such as Republic to carry out our law enforcement mission. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the fight against money laundering.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

STANLEY E. MORRIS,
Director.

AKIN, GUMP, STRAUSS, HAUER
& FELD, L.L.P., ATTORNEYS AT LAW,
Washington, DC, January 29, 1996.

EDITOR, New York,
K-III Magazine Corporation,
New York, NY.

DEAR SIR: The article entitled "The Money Plane" in your January 22, 1996 issue of New

York magazine misleads your readers by relying on anonymous innuendo to impeach the integrity of respected U.S. banks. As a former Ambassador to Russia, I have seen firsthand the importance of selling dollars to Russian banks: U.S. currency helps to stabilize the Russian economy as that nation's political leadership struggles to modernize and democratize their country and that in the best interests of the U.S. and the free world.

The circulation of the U.S. currency in Russia is an important element of U.S. trade and foreign policy. Through banknote and other transactions, U.S. banks remain engaged with their Russian counterparts, introduce them to and reinforce the high standards of the international banking system, and prevent the sort of economic isolation that could undermine the continuing development of Russia's financial system. Providing a steady supply of U.S. currency to Russian banks is perhaps the single most efficient form of support the U.S. can offer any country in a position as delicate as Russia's. Not to be overlooked is the fact that this banking activity also opens important avenues of commerce between Russia and the West.

Your article alleges that U.S. banks, Republic National Bank in particular, knowingly conduct banknote transactions with Russian banks that are controlled by or associated with organized crime. No one can deny that crime and corruption are today among the greatest threats to the creation of a modern democracy in Russia. However, while I am no expert on the subject, my understanding is that all banknote transactions between U.S. and Russian banks are conducted in strict accordance with the reporting and "know-your-customer" evidence to the contrary. The fact is that the U.S. banks that handle banknote transactions, with Russia or any other country, monitor to the best of their ability the activities of the banks with which they do business, continuously seek reliable information regarding the integrity of those institutions, and will discontinue transactions with any institution that government authorities indicate is involved in criminal activity. Furthermore, I know of no instances where federal banking or law enforcement officials have indicated that there are Russian banks with whom business should be discontinued.

As far as criminal activity in Russia is concerned, it should be stopped by increasing the resources and capabilities of Russian law enforcement and continuing the cooperation that exists between U.S. and Russian authorities.

You did a disservice to your readers and I hope that, as a matter of integrity, you will publicly apologize and correct your misstatements that I am sure were inadvertent.

Respectfully,

ROBERT S. STRAUSS.

At a press conference on January 18, 1996, United States Ambassador to Russia, Thomas Pickering stated:

American and international banks who are depositories with the federal reserve system will be the principal conduits, may be as many as a dozen of those bringing money here to Russia, where it will be redistributed through their arrangements with the Russian banking system into the Russian system to meet the demands that people will have in this country for new dollars.

We do not believe that activities taken through the currency provide an effective

remedy for money laundering or the use of currency in criminal activities and, indeed, suggestions that this be done, in our view, would produce greater negative effects on the stability of worldwide currency systems than they would produce benefits in attacking the criminal culture. . . .

IN HONOR OF MR. HENRY
SANCHEZ ON HIS 50 YEARS OF
FEDERAL SERVICE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 1996

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Henry Sanchez on the occasion of his 50th year of Government service. A special ceremony will be held in his honor on Friday, February 16, at the Harbor View Community Club, Military Ocean Terminal in Bayonne, NJ.

In February 1944, Mr. Sanchez began his career in the Navy as a signalman. For his part in the WWII effort, he served on a ship transporting American troops to France during the Normandy Invasion. Mr. Sanchez was discharged from the Navy in April 1948. Two years later, he began to work at the Brooklyn Army Base in New York.

Mr. Sanchez transferred to the Bayonne Naval Supply Depot in March 1950. For over 45 years, Mr. Sanchez worked in Bayonne as a firefighter and a supervisory transportation assistant at the Seavon Container Control Division, Military Ocean Terminal. In 1980, Mr. Sanchez moved to the U.S. Air Force's Water Port Logistics Office where he held the position of deputy commander GS-12. Several years later he was promoted to GS-13 as the deputy director, Personal Property Directorate, Military Traffic Management Command, Eastern Area.

Mr. Sanchez, an outstanding leader on the job, has also dedicated much of his time to the Bayonne community. He is a board member of the United Way of Hudson County, vice president of the American Legion's Mackenzie Post 165, and a trustee for the Bayonne Veterans Relief Fund.

For his outstanding work and leadership in logistical support of the European, African, Mediterranean and Arctic regions, Mr. Sanchez was awarded the U.S. Air Force Meritorious Civilian Service Medal. He has devoted himself to serving his country with honor and dignity. I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring this wonderful individual. I am proud to have such a remarkable man working in my district.

HONORING THE 1996 FAIRFAX
COUNTY CHAMBER OF COM-
MERCE VALOR AWARD WINNERS

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 1996

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 1996 Fairfax County Chamber of

Commerce Award Winners. On Thursday, February 15, 1996, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce will present the Annual Valor Awards at the McLean Hilton.

The Valor Awards honor public service officers who have demonstrated extreme self-sacrifice, personal bravery, and ingenuity in the performance of their duty. There are five categories: The Gold Medal of Valor, the Silver Medal of Valor, the Bronze Medal of Valor, the Certificate of Valor, the Life Saving Award.

The Valor Awards is a project of the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. This is the 18th year that these awards have been presented.

The Silver Medal of Valor is awarded in recognition of acts involving great personal risk.

The Silver Medal of Valor Award Winners for 1996 are: Sgt. J. Vincent Byrd, Detective Kenneth M. Pedigo, Detective Susan Lamar

The Bronze Medal of Valor is awarded in recognition of acts involving unusual risk beyond that which should be expected while performing the usual responsibilities of the member.

The Bronze Medal of Valor Award Winners for 1996 are: Detective Onzlow G. Williamson, Jr., Detective Beth A. Benham, 2d Lt. Richard

H. Bearen, Sgt. Samuel J. Masiello, Police Officer 1st Class Bryan W. Holland, Police Officer 1st Class Robert D. Hill, 2d Lt. Frank J. Kitzerow, Capt. Michael LoMonaco, Sgt. Jeffrey E. Powell, Master Police Officer James T. Stewart III, Police Officer 1st Class Rolland L. Watenpaugh, Police Officer Aaron M. Kush, Police Officer 1st Class Stephen M. Needels, Police Officer Mark E. Royer, Firefighter Lawrence M. Braswell, Technician Michael A. Weldon

The Bronze Medal of Valor Unit Citation Award Winners for 1996 are: Master Police Officer Michael J. Brennan, Police Officer 1st Class Richard D. Carlton, Officer Chris C. Cochran, 2d Lt. Arthur J. Hurlock, Sgt. James Kellam, Police Officer 1st Class Steven R. Mattos, Master Police Officer Jackie L. Mitchem, Police Officer 1st Class Lee P. Northrop, Police Officer 1st Class Don C. Pierson, Police Officer 1st Class James M. Pollack, Lt. David Mr. Rohrer

The Certificate of Valor is awarded for acts that involve personal risk and/or demonstration of judgment, zeal, or ingenuity not normally involved in the performance of duties.

The Certificate of Valor Award Winners for 1996 are: Capt. Randall J. Kennedy, Firefighter Edward C. Lofties, Officer Timothy C.

Benedict, Police Officer First Class Robert Egan, Sgt. Matthew W. Pifger, Master Police Officer Ralph R. Scott, Technician Edson Dewhurst, Jr.

The Lifesaving Award is awarded for acts taken in life-threatening situations where an individual's life is in jeopardy, either medically or physically.

The Lifesaving Award Winners for 1996 are: Detective Nancy G. Schaefer, Volunteer Firefighter Carl August Lief Ericson, Technician John H. Marlin, Firefighter William A. Sutphin, Jr., Master Technician Konrad A. Kurtz, Lt. Carlton G. Burkhammer, Firefighter George N. Pancione, Jr., Master Technician Michael J. Stone, Firefighter David D. Sweetland, Deputy Sheriff Kathleen A. Miller, Deputy Sheriff Sgt. Michael G. Dickerson, Deputy Sheriff Private First Class Melanie K. Sjurseth, Deputy Sheriff Cpl. John A. Craig, Deputy Sheriff Private First Class Barry V. Garlow, Deputy Sheriff Brian K. Harmon, Deputy Sheriff Alberto D. Pinto, Officer Edward K. Warren, Police Officer First Class Jarvis D. Lay, Public Safety Communications Assistant II Kimberly A. Wright

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues join me in commending these fine citizens who are truly deserving of the title "hero."